

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 OMB-01

IO-12 RSR-01 /116 W

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O R 091148 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0021

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS/ PFOR, PBOR, IS, JO

SUBJECT: CABINET DECISION NOT TO CHANGE POLICY ON BUYING LAND
IN TERRITORIES

REF: TEL AVIV 2770 NOTAL

SUMMARY. ISRAELI CABINET DECIDED APRIL 8 NOT TO CHANGE EXISTING
POLICY CONCERNING PURCHASE OF LAND IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. PRES
CLAIMS THAT MAJOR FACTOR IN DECISION WAS ALLEGED TELEPHONE
CONVERSA-

TION BETWEEN ASST SECY SISCO AND AMB DINITZ. SHORTLY BEFORE CABINET
SESSION MRS MEIR REPORTEDLY TOLD DAYAN AND JUSTICE MINISTER SHAPIRO
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THAT SHE WOULD NOT SUPPORT ANY CHANGE IN LAND POLICY. LGOSS SAYS DAYAN, SHAPIRO, AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS MINISTER WARHAFTIG HAD ACTUALLY SUBMITTED PROPOSALS TO CABINET TWO WEEKS AGO, FACT HAD

BEEN CONCEALED BY GOI. END OF SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF GOVERNMENT STATEMENT FOLLOWING APRIL 8 CABINET SESSION: BEGIN TEXT. THE CABINET NOTED THE PRIME MINISTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT, SINCE NO PROPOSALS FOR CHANGING THE EXISTING PRACTICE REGARDING THE TRANSFER OF LAND IN THE ADMINISTERED AREAS HAD BEEN SUBMITTED FOR A VOTE BY THE CABINET, THE SITUATION EXTANT SINCE 1967 REMAINS IN EFFECT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT ORDERS CONCERNED, AND THE DIRECTIVES TO BE ISSUED BY THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE THEREUNDER. END TEXT.

2. ISRAELI RADIO APRIL 9 ASSERTS THAT ASST SECY SISCO TELEPHONED AMB DINITZ, PRIOR TO CABINET DECISION, AND EXPRESSED ANXIETY OVER ISSUE OF LAND SALES, BUT DID NOT ASK FOR CLARIFICATION. SISCO MADE IT CLEAR THAT US WILL NOT INTERVENE IN ISRAELI INTERNAL AFFAIRS, RADIO SAYS. ACCORDING TO LEAD STORIES IN APRIL 9 AFTERNOON NEWSPAPERS, SISCO CONVERSATION WITH DINITZ WAS MAJOR FACTOR IN PRIME MINISTER'S DECISION NOT TO SUPPORT CHANGE IN LAND POLICY. YEDOT SAYS SISCO ASKED DINITZ WHETHER CHANGE IS TAKING PLACE IN ISRAELI POLICY REGARDING TERRITORIES. SISCO REPORTEDLY TOLD DINITZ THAT US ADMINISTRATION WAS SHOWING INTEREST IN THIS SUBJECT BECAUSE OF ITS POLITICAL NATURE. MAARIV SAYS US POSITION AS EXPRESSED BY SISCO TO DINITZ INFLUENCED MRS MEIR'S APPROACH ON LAND PURCHASE ISSUE. PRESS CLAIMS THAT WHILE ALLEGED US AND ALSO BRITISH OFFICIAL EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN PLUS UNFAVORABLE WORLD MEDIA REACTION DID EFFECT MRS MEIR'S THINKING, SHE WAS ALREADY TROUBLED BY DIVISIVENESS THIS ISSUE INSIDE ISRAEL PLUS SPIRALLING OF ILLEGAL LAND TRANSACTIONS IN ANTICIPATION OF GOI POLICY CHANGE.

3. ISRAELI PRESS SAYS APRIL 9 THAT PRIME MINISTER MEIR CHANGED HER MIND OVER WEEKEND ON QUESTION OF JEWISH LAND PURCHASES ON WEST BANK. FROM POSITION OF LUKEWARM SUPPORT FOR JUSTICE MINISTER SHAPIRO'S COMPROMISE PROPOSAL, WHEREBY ISRAELIS WOULD BE ALLOWED TO BUY LAND UNDER CLOSE GOVERNMENT SUPERVISION, SHE VEERED TO FIRM OPPOSITION TO ANY CHANGE

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IN PRESENT POLICY. SHAPIRO CONFIRMED IN RADIO INTERVIEW APRIL 8 THAT MRS. MEIR HAD CHANGED HER VIEW. HE SAID HE HAD ORIGINALLY MADE HIS PROPOSAL BECAUSE HE HAD REASON TO BELIEVE SHE WOULD SUPPORT IT. DEFENSE MINISTER DAYAN, ON THE OTHER HAND ISSUED STATEMENT APRIL 8 THROUGH HIS SPOKESMAN THAT HIS OPINION WAS UNCHANGED AND THAT HE STILL BELIEVED PRIVATE CITIZENS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO BUY LAND IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, UNDER PROPER GOVERNMENT SUPERVISION. DAYAN'S SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED THAT DEFENSE MINISTER SAW NO POINT IN PUTTING HIS PROPOSAL TO FORMAL VOTE WHEN PRIME MINISTER HAD STATED IN ADVANCE THAT SHE WAS OPPOSED TO IT. PRESS SAYS THAT BY NOT SUBMITTING HIS PROPOSAL TO FORMAL CABINET RULING DAYAN HAD AVOIDED CLEARLY STATED DECISION, WHICH WOULD HAVE ALMOST PRECLUDED RAISING ISSUE AGAIN.

4. PRESS APRIL 9 REPORTS THAT DAYAN, SHAPIRO AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS MINISTER WARHAFTIG HAD TABLED THREE DIFFERENT PROPOSALS ABOUT PERMITTING LAND SALES IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. ALL THREE DECIDED AT LAST MINUTE NOT TO CALL FOR VOTE ON THEIR PROPOSALS AT WEEKLY CABINET SESSION WHEN THEY DISCOVERED TO THEIR SURPRISE THAT MRS MEIR WOULD NOT BACK THE PROPOSALS IN ANY FORM. PRESS SAYS MINISTERS HAD MADE PROPOSALS AT CABINET DISCUSSION TWO WEEKS AGO BUT CABINET DELIBERATELY CONCEALED THIS FACT FROM PRESS. MRS MEIR REPORTEDLY MET WITH SHAPIRO AND DAYAN SEPARATELY BEFORE APRIL 8 CABINET SESSION OPENED TO ADVISE THEM " SHE WOULD NOT SUPPORT ANY CHANGE OF THE EXISTING POLICY ABOUT LAND SALES," BUT SHE DID NOT PHRASE THIS STATEMENT AS AN " ULTIMATUM CONTAINING A THREAT TO RESIGN IF THEY INSISTED ON A VOTE."

5. OF THREE PROPOSALS, ACCORDING TO PRESS, WARHAFTIG'S WAS MOST FAR REACHING. IT WOULD HAVE PLACED NO LIMITS WHATSOEVER ON LAND SALES TO ISRAELIS. DAYAN ENVISIONED CONTROLS ON LAND SALES TO OBVIATE SPECULATION. SHAPIRO'S COMPROMISE PROPOSAL CALLED FOR CONTROLLED SALES OF LAND IN WHICH SUPERVISION WOULD HAVE BEEN EXERCISED BY CABINET COMMITTEE, ACCORDING TO POLITICAL AS WELL AS ECONOMIC CRITERIA.

6. APRIL 9 PRESS COMMENTS THAT GOVERNMENT DECISION APPEARS TO HAVE DEFUSED TENSION IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, WHERE ISSUE STIRRED UP STORM OF CONTROVERSY AND AT SAME TIME PUSHED PRICES TO INCREDIBLE HEIGHTS. SEVERAL WEST BANK MAYORS REPORTEDLY PRAISED GOVERNMENT'S DECISION AS WISE STEP WHICH

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REINSTATED CHANCES FOR PEACE.

7. AFTERNOON NEWSPAPERS EMPHASIZE IMPORTANCE OF SAPIR IN PRIME MINISTER'S DECISION, COMMENTING THAT SAPIR EXPRESSED

HIS OPPOSITION TO CHANGE IN LAND POLICY FROM BEGINNING. SAPIR
REPORTEDLY FELT THAT ALLOWING PRIVATE PURCHASE OF LAND WOULD LEAD
TO CRASSEST IMAGINABLE SPECULATION.
ZURHELLEN

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